Alternative jobs to retired armed personnel

350. SARDAR GURCHARAN SINGH TOHRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that all armed forces personnel below the rank of General or equivalent are required to retire in the prime of their youth, compelling them to search second careers which are difficult to get and thus rendering them jobless at the time of their need; and

(b) whether Government propose to take effective measures to provide alternative jobs to all armed forces retirees upto the age of 60 years as in the case of other All India Services?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (b) It is true that Armed Forces personnel below the rank of General and equivalent retire at relatively lower ages as compared to their civil counterparts. This is necessitated owning to the specific requirements of the Armed Forces keeping in view the fighting efficiency of the forces.

There is no proposal to provide alternative jobs upto the age of 60 years to all Armed Forces retirees.

Additional funds for upgradation of combat planes

351. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a report appearing in a prestigious defence industry newspaper that 50 per cent of combat planes of the IAF have been grounded is correct; and

(b) whether additional funds for upgradation were not sought well in advance to avoid this sort of situation compromising national security?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The report is incorrect, unfounded and misleading. Serviceability of the IAF fleet and equipement is of a high standard.

(b) Does nor arise.

Complaints against Commandant

352. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently received complaints against local Commandant 18 F.A.D.-UCCHIBASSI district, Hoshiarpur in Punjab regarding corruption and irregularities resulting in loss to the exchaquer and harassment to the residents of local commandant area;

(b) if so, the specific charges levelled against the commandant;

(c) whether the charges have been inquired into;

(d) if so, the result of the inquiry and he action taken thereon; and

(e) if no inquiry has so far been conluctedordered, the reasons therefor and by when action on the complaints is likely o be taken?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (e) A pseudonymous complaint has been received by the Chief of the Army Staff against local Commandant of 18 F.A.D. alleging misappropriation of rations and funds and cutting of trees in military premises. The complaint is uder investigation.

Arrest of international gun-runners

353. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reports appearing in Sunday dated the 30th August, 1998, under the heading "An officer in Bangkok" and if so, the details thereof and reaction of Government thereto;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Indian Forces had nabbed a gang of international gun-runners, allegedly supplying weapons to extremists organisation in North-East and seized an assorted catch

of arms on the 11th February, 1998 in Andaman and Nocobar Island and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have conducted any enquiry to ascertain the role of the officer of the Army in this regard and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (c) Government's attention has been drawn to the news item published in the Sunday magazine dated 30th August, 1998. While the contents of the report may be based on individual perception of the journalist concerned, the responsibility of the investigation of the entire case, which is now sub-judice, has been entrusted to the Central Bureau of Ivestigation.

(b) In a combined Services operation conducted by the Army, Navy, Air Force and the Coast Guard in the Andaman & Nocobar Islands on 10/11 February, 1998, six gun-runners were killed and 73 apprehended; 2 gun boats and 2 trawlers containing arms and ammunition were captured.

Draft Bills for formation of New States

354. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the draft bills seeking formation of new States like Uttaranchal, Vananchal and Chattisgarh were sent to the respective States for their approval; and

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof;

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) The draft Bills providing for the formation of new States of Uttarakhand/ Uttaranchal, Vanachal and Chattisgarh were referred to the State Legislatures of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya pradesh respectively in August, 1998 for expressing their views as required under article 3 of the Constitution of India. The views of the State Legislatures have been received.

Attempt to Blast Jammu Temple

355. SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently an attempt to blast a temple in Jammu by I.S.I. agents has been foiled;

(b) whether it is also a fact that similar attempts were also made to attack religious places in various parts of the country;

(c) whether I.S.I. hands were behind all these attacks; and

(d) it so, that steps have been taken to meet the threats posed by I.S.I. activities?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Government is not aware of any such attempt. However, recoveries made from a militant killed in an incident had revealed that he had planned to blow up a temple in the Jammu area.

(b) to (d) Government is aware of the sinister designs of pak ISI to destablise India by sponsoring terrorism and subversive activities in different parts of the country including its efforts to target and train misguided youths for engineering violence. A close and continuous watch is, therefore, being kept on the situation all necessary efforts,. including sustained operations against terrorists and subversive elements, are being made to ensure that such designs are not allowed to succeed. Government have taken several steps which include sensitising and gearing up of the intelligence machinery, sharing of intelligence and co-ordinated action by concerend Central and State agencies, border fencing, intensification of order patrolling, upgrading of technical equipment with the security forces, increase in number of check posts as well as sensitising and alerting the various